

## **Texas Military Department Issues Statement on Efforts to Unionize State Servicemembers**

The Texas Military Department has issued the following statement on efforts to unionize state servicemembers:

Chapter 617 of the Texas Government Code prohibits collective bargaining and strikes by public employees. This includes the state servicemembers on Operation Lone Star.

Servicemembers should not be misled by union agitators into believing that Texas law allows them to engage in collective bargaining. It does not.

As previously stated, Texas Military Department leadership continues to actively address concerns raised by servicemembers on Operation Lone Star.

### *The Texas Military Department provided the following update on Operation Lone Star statistics:*

Every servicemember assigned to Operation Lone Star is being paid, and the Texas Military Department has resolved over 90% of pay discrepancies, a significant improvement over the previous month. Texas Military Department pay strike teams continue working daily with individual servicemembers to address pay questions and resolve any discrepancies.

To date, 78% of more than 1,100 hardship requests have been approved. The Texas Military Department continues to review incoming hardship requests and evaluates each request on a case-by-case basis. A majority of approved hardship requests have been based on a significant impact to the servicemember's civilian career, dependent care, or education.

As part of the Texas Military Department's plan to identify and act on areas of improvement regarding living conditions, TMD leadership has worked with base camp vendors to initiate contracts and begin construction of dorm-style living. Guardsmen have begun moving into these new and improved accommodations.

The Texas Military Department has also provided appropriate gear to all personnel who need it to carry out their duties. Ahead of the February 3<sup>rd</sup> winter storm, supplemental cold and wet weather gear was delivered to servicemembers, ensuring troops supporting Operation Lone Star's front line have appropriate protective gear. This, coupled with high-mobility multi-purpose vehicles (Humvees) equipped with heaters stationed at security points along the Texas-Mexico border, are able to keep servicemembers safe, warm, and out of the elements during winter weather events.

As a result of Operation Lone Star, and the work of the Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas National Guard, over 11,000 criminal arrests have been made including criminal trespassing. Large amounts of Mexican Cartel fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, and marijuana have been seized before it could be trafficked into communities. Over 200,000 illegal immigrants have been apprehended and referred to federal law enforcement partners.

Of those referrals, more than half were encountered by Texas National Guard members. Additionally, because of the presence of National Guard servicemembers along the border, more than 12,000 illegal immigrants have been deterred back to Mexico.

The Texas Military Department is thankful for the service and sacrifice of the men and women serving on Operation Lone Star whose hard work and dedication helps keep our state and nation safe.